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Security Council

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Resolution 2240 (2015)

Adopted by the Security Council at its 7531st meeting, on 9 October 2015

The Security Council,

Recalling its press statement of 21 April on the maritime tragedy in the Mediterranean Sea,

Reaffirming its strong commitment to the sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity and national unity of Libya,

Recalling that international law, as reflected in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea of 10 December 1982, sets out the legal framework applicable to activities in the ocean,

Reaffirming also the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC Convention) and its Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Air and Sea, as the primary international legal instruments to combat the smuggling of migrants and related conduct, and the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the UNTOC Convention, as the primary international legal instruments to combat trafficking in persons,

Underlining that, although the crime of smuggling of migrants may share, in some cases, some common features with the crime of trafficking in persons, Member States need to recognise that they are distinct crimes, as defined by the UNTOC Convention and its Protocols, requiring differing legal, operational, and policy responses,

Deploring the continuing maritime tragedies in the Mediterranean Sea that have resulted in hundreds of casualties, and *noting with concern* that such casualties were, in some cases, the result of exploitation and misinformation by transnational criminal organisations which facilitated the illegal smuggling of migrants via dangerous methods for personal gain and with callous disregard for human life,

Expressing grave concern at the recent proliferation of, and endangerment of lives by, the smuggling of migrants in the Mediterranean Sea, in particular off the coast of Libya and *recognizing* that among these migrants may be persons who meet the definition of a refugee under the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and the 1967 Protocol thereto,

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Emphasizing in this respect that migrants, including asylum-seekers and regardless of their migration status, should be treated with humanity and dignity and that their rights should be fully respected, and *urging* all States in this regard to comply with their obligations under international law, including international human rights law and international refugee law, as applicable, *stressing also* the obligation of States, where applicable, to protect the human rights of migrants regardless of their migration status, including when implementing their specific migration and border security policies,

Reaffirming in this respect the need to promote and protect effectively the human rights and fundamental freedoms of all migrants, regardless of their migration status, especially those of women and children, and to address international migration through international, regional or bilateral cooperation and dialogue and through a comprehensive and balanced approach, recognizing the roles and responsibilities of countries of origin, transit and destination in promoting and protecting the human rights of all migrants, and avoiding approaches that might aggravate their vulnerability,

Further recalling the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea and the International Convention on Maritime Search and Rescue,

Expressing further concern that the situation in Libya is exacerbated by the smuggling of migrants and human trafficking into, through and from the Libyan territory, which could provide support to other organised crime and terrorist networks in Libya,

Mindful of its primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security under the Charter of the United Nations,

Underlining the primary responsibility of the Libyan Government to take appropriate action to prevent the recent proliferation of, and endangerment of lives by, the smuggling of migrants and human trafficking through the territory of Libya and its territorial sea,

Mindful of the need to support further efforts to strengthen Libyan border management, *considering* the difficulties of the Libyan Government to manage effectively the migratory flows in transit through Libyan territory, and *noting* its concern for the repercussions of this phenomenon on the stability of Libya and of the Mediterranean region,

Welcoming support already provided by the most concerned Member States, including Member States of the European Union (EU), taking into account inter alia the role of FRONTEX and the specific mandate of EUBAM Libya in support of the Libyan Government, and by neighbouring States,

Acknowledging the European Council statement of 23 April 2015 and the press statement of the African Union Peace and Security Council of 27 April, which underlined the need for effective international action to address both the immediate and long-term aspects of human trafficking towards Europe,

Taking note of the Decision of the Council of the European Union of 18 May 2015 setting up 'EUNAVFOR Med' which underlined the need for effective international action to address both the immediate and long-term aspects of migrant smuggling and human trafficking towards Europe,

Taking further note of the ongoing discussions between the EU and the Libyan Government on migration related issues,

Expressing also strong support to the States in the region affected by the smuggling of migrants and human trafficking, and *emphasizing* the need to step up coordination of efforts in order to strengthen an effective multidimensional response to these common challenges in the spirit of international solidarity and shared responsibility, to tackle their root causes and to prevent people from being exploited by migrant smugglers and human traffickers,

Acknowledging the need to assist States in the region, upon request, in the development of comprehensive and integrated regional and national strategies, legal frameworks, and institutions to counter terrorism, transnational organised crime, migrant smuggling, and human trafficking, including mechanisms to implement them within the framework of States' obligations under applicable international law,

Stressing that addressing both migrant smuggling and human trafficking, including dismantling smuggling and trafficking networks in the region and prosecuting migrant smugglers, and human traffickers requires a coordinated, multidimensional approach with States of origin, of transit, and of destination, and further *acknowledging* the need to develop effective strategies to deter migrant smuggling and human trafficking in States of origin and transit,

Emphasizing that migrants should be treated with humanity and dignity and that their rights should be fully respected, and *urging* all States in this regard to comply with their obligations under international law, including international human rights law and international refugee law, as applicable,

Bearing in mind the obligations of States under applicable international law to exercise due diligence to prevent and combat migrant smuggling and human trafficking, to investigate and punish perpetrators, to identify and provide effective assistance to victims of trafficking and migrants and to cooperate to the fullest extent possible to prevent and suppress migrant smuggling and human trafficking,

Affirming the necessity to put an end to the recent proliferation of, and endangerment of lives by, the smuggling of migrants and trafficking of persons in the Mediterranean Sea off the coast of Libya, and, for these specific purposes, acting under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations,

1. *Condemns* all acts of migrant smuggling and human trafficking into, through and from the Libyan territory and off the coast of Libya, which undermine further the process of stabilisation of Libya and endanger the lives of thousands of people;

2. *Calls on* Member States acting nationally or through regional organisations, including the EU, to assist Libya, upon request, in building needed capacity including to secure its borders and to prevent, investigate and prosecute acts of smuggling of migrants and human trafficking through its territory and in its territorial sea; in order to prevent the further proliferation of, and endangerment of lives by, the smuggling of migrants and human trafficking into, through and from the territory of Libya and off its coast;

3. *Urges* Member States and regional organisations, in the spirit of international solidarity and shared responsibility, to cooperate with the Libyan Government, and with each other, including by sharing information about acts of

migrant smuggling and human trafficking in Libya's territorial sea and on the high seas off the coast of Libya, and rendering assistance to migrants and victims of human trafficking recovered at sea, in accordance with international law;

4. *Urges* States and regional organisations whose naval vessels and aircraft operate on the high seas and airspace off the coast of Libya, to be vigilant for acts of migrant smuggling and human trafficking, and in this context, *encourages* States and regional organisations to increase and coordinate their efforts to deter acts of migrant smuggling and human trafficking, in cooperation with Libya;

5. *Calls upon* Member States acting nationally or through regional organisations that are engaged in the fight against migrant smuggling and human trafficking to inspect, as permitted under international law, on the high seas off the coast of Libya, any unflagged vessels that they have reasonable grounds to believe have been, are being, or imminently will be used by organised criminal enterprises for migrant smuggling or human trafficking from Libya, including inflatable boats, rafts and dinghies;

6. *Further calls upon* such Member States to inspect, with the consent of the flag State, on the high seas off the coast of Libya, vessels that they have reasonable grounds to believe have been, are being, or imminently will be used by organised criminal enterprises for migrant smuggling or human trafficking from Libya;

7. *Decides*, with a view to saving the threatened lives of migrants or of victims of human trafficking on board such vessels as mentioned above, to authorise, in these exceptional and specific circumstances, for a period of one year from the date of the adoption of this resolution, Member States, acting nationally or through regional organisations that are engaged in the fight against migrant smuggling and human trafficking, to inspect on the high seas off the coast of Libya vessels that they have reasonable grounds to suspect are being used for migrant smuggling or human trafficking from Libya, provided that such Member States and regional organisations make good faith efforts to obtain the consent of the vessel's flag State prior to using the authority outlined in this paragraph;

8. *Decides* to authorise for a period of one year from the date of the adoption of this resolution, Member States acting nationally or through regional organisations to seize vessels inspected under the authority of paragraph 7 that are confirmed as being used for migrant smuggling or human trafficking from Libya, and *underscores* that further action with regard to such vessels inspected under the authority of paragraph 7, including disposal, will be taken in accordance with applicable international law with due consideration of the interests of any third parties who have acted in good faith;

9. *Calls upon* all flag States involved to cooperate with respect to efforts under paragraphs 7 and 8, and *decides* that Member States acting nationally or through regional organisations under the authority of those paragraphs shall keep flag States informed of actions taken with respect to their vessels, and *calls upon* flag States that receive such requests to review and respond to them in a rapid and timely manner;

10. *Decides* to authorise Member States acting nationally or through regional organisations to use all measures commensurate to the specific circumstances in confronting migrant smugglers or human traffickers in carrying out activities under paragraphs 7 and 8 and in full compliance with international human rights law, as

applicable, *underscores* that the authorizations in paragraph 7 and 8 do not apply with respect to vessels entitled to sovereign immunity under international law, and *calls upon* Member States and regional organisations carrying out activities under paragraphs 7, 8 and this paragraph, to provide for the safety of persons on board as an utmost priority and to avoid causing harm to the marine environment or to the safety of navigation;

11. *Affirms* that the authorisations provided in paragraphs 7 and 8 apply only with respect to the situation of migrant smuggling and human trafficking on the high seas off the coast of Libya and shall not affect the rights or obligations or responsibilities of Member States under international law, including any rights or obligations under UNCLOS, including the general principle of exclusive jurisdiction of a flag State over its vessels on the high seas, with respect to any other situation, and *further affirms* that the authorisation provided in paragraph 10 applies only in confronting migrant smugglers and human traffickers on the high seas off the coast of Libya;

12. *Underscores* that this resolution is intended to disrupt the organised criminal enterprises engaged in migrant smuggling and human trafficking and prevent loss of life and is not intended to undermine the human rights of individuals or prevent them from seeking protection under international human rights law and international refugee law;

13. *Emphasises* that all migrants, including asylum-seekers, should be treated with humanity and dignity and that their rights should be fully respected, and urges all States in this regard to comply with their obligations under international law, including international human rights law and international refugee law, as applicable;

14. *Urges* Member States and regional organisations acting under the authority of this resolution to have due regard for the livelihoods of those engaged in fishing or other legitimate activities;

15. *Calls upon* all States, with relevant jurisdiction under international law and national legislation, to investigate and prosecute persons responsible for acts of migrant smuggling and human trafficking at sea, consistent with States' obligations under international law, including international human rights law and international refugee law, as applicable;

16. *Calls* for Member States to consider ratifying or acceding to, and for States Parties to effectively implement the Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, and as well as the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children;

17. *Requests* States utilising the authority of this resolution to inform the Security Council within three months of the date of adoption of this resolution and every three months thereafter on the progress of actions undertaken in exercise of the authority provided in paragraphs 7 to 10 above;

18. *Requests* the Secretary-General to report to the Security Council eleven months after the adoption of this resolution on its implementation, in particular with regards to the implementation of paragraphs 7 to 10 above;

19. *Expresses* its intention to review the situation and consider, as appropriate, renewing the authority provided in this resolution for additional periods;

20. *Decides* to remain seized of the matter.